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Synopses of Important Articles.

Property in the Faith and Life of the Apostolic Church.*—Four points are discussed by the writer : (1) The Estimation of Property at the Time. The prevailing view of the world was that of something evil, the Christian's enemy. It was set in sharp contrast with the future world, was under the power of the devil, and would soon be destroyed. The result was an uncompromising hostility to the present system and everything connected with it, a strict renunciation of its goods, voluntary poverty and abstinence from ordinary pleasures. (2) The Economic Position of the Christians. The number of poor people was very large, and was increased by persecutions, confiscations, loss of worldly calling, and the care of widows and orphans. Its position was not very happy, and necessarily became worse as the number of its converts rose. (3) The Active Charity of the Christians. This was one of the chief features of their life, their generosity being attested by many witnesses, and manifested in their readiness to share their goods with any who were in need. At first the motive to this had been the purely religious one of love to brother men resting on love to God. But in the later years of the Apostolic period other motives came in, such as the sense of belonging to a common brotherhood, the changed view of "good works" as a means to salvation, the strong hope of a reward in the heavenly kingdom, which was so near, and the power of alms to clear the giver from sin. (4) The Church Support of the Poor. The Church undertook the duty as a church, feeling that the public alms was a sacrifice in the Christian service, a religious act of dedication, and not in imitation of the insurance methods of heathen societies. All who were out of work or incapable of it were recipients of this charity, widows, orphans, the aged, the weak, prisoners, and traveling brothers. A special form of this charitable giving was the community of goods, which did not mean (as with the Essenes) that a man *could* not call anything his own, but that voluntarily he relinquished that right, holding his property as a high form of offering for the good of all. Sometimes one official, sometimes another, disbursed this public charity ; generally speaking, it was the head of the community who was intrusted with the duty.

The matter of the property conceptions and relations of the early Christians is one of living interest and importance at the present time. Perhaps we do not yet understand just what they were historically, quite surely we are not agreed as to whether we ought to "go and do likewise." This year the question is coming up for treatment in all our Sunday schools. May we not hope that new light will be thrown upon the historical facts, and that we may learn the meaning of those facts for our present social conditions and obligations.

The Aramaic Gospel.† There are four kinds of textual discrepancies to which Semitic texts are liable in the process of transcription : (1) the diverse

* By H. Haller, in *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, drittes heft, 1891. Reviewed by F. J. Rae in *Critical Review*, Oct. 1891.

† By Prof. J. T. Marshall, M. A., in *Expositor*, Nov. 1891.